

Grammar L4GLO8

Discourse Markers: Problem and Solution

Learning Outcome 8: Discourse markers to express notions of agreement and disagreement, cause and effect, problem and solution and advantages and disadvantages

NOTICING A Read the sentences. Answer the questions below.

1. This solution would be relatively cheap, whereas that solution would be quite expensive.
2. The issue is that our sales are lower than we need them to be.
3. As a result of the large numbers of students in the library, there isn't enough space for everyone.
4. One possible solution could be to invite fewer people to the celebration.
5. We're having some difficulties due to a lack of hot water in the building.
6. One drawback of that solution is the long hours that staff will have to work.
7. A big advantage of this solution is that we wouldn't have to make any significant changes.

Which underlined word or phrase ...

- a. introduces a problem? ____
- b. gives the cause of a problem? ____
- c. gives the effect of a problem? ____
- d. introduces something that could help with a problem? ____
- e. introduces an advantage? ____
- f. introduces a disadvantage? ____
- g. compares options? ____

Discourse Markers: Problem and Solution

When you are speaking or writing about problems and solutions, you usually need to explain the cause of the problem and its effects first so that other people can understand it. Then you can start to talk about possible solutions to the problems. Talking about the advantages and disadvantages of these solutions will help you to understand what the best solution is and you can then compare different options. There are words and phrases you can use to show the reader or listener which step in this process you are on so it's easier for them to follow your discussion of a problem and its solution.

B Complete the sentences with the underlined words and phrases from exercise A.

1. _____ is that nobody knows for sure if it will work.
2. _____ we have bought too many of those items and we can't send any of them back.
3. We're having a problem _____ a lack of staff in the sales department.
4. This solution would be easy to put into action, _____ that solution would be more difficult.
5. _____ the amount of food we need to prepare, we'll have to ask more people to help us with it.
6. _____ to only change the parts of the text that people didn't understand.

C Think of a problem that a student like you might have. Write sentences to ...

1. describe the problem.
2. explain the cause of the problem.
3. explain its effects.

D Work in pairs. Take turns presenting the problem you wrote about in exercise C. Then discuss two or three possible solutions for the problem and the advantages and disadvantages of each one. Finally, agree on the best solution for the problem together.